United Nations A/63/816

General Assembly

Distr.: General
9 April 2009
English
Original: French

Sixty-third session
Agenda item 104 (c)
Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of eighteen members of the Human Rights Council

Note verbale dated 30 March 2009 from the Permanent Mission of Cameroon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretariat of the United Nations

The Permanent Mission of Cameroon to the United Nations presents its compliments to the United Nations Secretariat and has the honour to inform it that the Government of Cameroon has decided to present the candidature of Cameroon for re-election to the Human Rights Council at the election to be held in May 2009.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251, the Secretariat will find annexed hereto Cameroon's declaration of pledges and commitments relating to its re-election to the Human Rights Council.

The Permanent Mission of Cameroon would be grateful if the Secretariat could circulate the said document.

The Permanent Mission of Cameroon to the United Nations takes this opportunity to convey to the United Nations Secretariat the renewed assurances of its highest consideration.

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Annex to the note verbale dated 30 March 2009 from the Permanent Mission of Cameroon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretariat of the United Nations

[Original: English and French]

Candidature of Cameroon to the United Nations Human Rights Council

CAMEROON'S PLEDGE AND COMMITMENTS TO HUMAN RIGHTS

Cameroon committed to the promotion and the protection of Human Rights at the national, as well as the regional and international levels, has been Member of the Human Rights Commission and has actively participated to the creation of the Human Rights Council.

Cameroon's commitment to Human Rights is reflected through the creation of an appropriate legal and institutional framework, the adoption of a number of instruments to ensure the protection of Human Rights. The fundamental rights are rooted into the constitutional bedrock and the Constitution also provides the incorporation of international conventions and agreements into the domestic legal framework with a transcendental dimension. As matter of fact, the main conventions on Human Rights where Cameroon is part in the international level (International Covenant on Civil and Political rights, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights, Convention of the Rights of Child, Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discriminations against Women etc..) and in the regional level (African Charter on Human and People's Rights, African Charter on Human Rights etc…) occupy an important place in the order of local judicial norms.

At the institutional level, Cameroon's set up an independent Judicial Authority and a Constitutional Council which structures are being put in place progressively. The National Committee for Human Rights created in 1990 was transformed into the National Committee for Human Rights and Freedoms in 2004 in order to comply with Paris Principles. A Department of Human Rights was created in the Ministry of Justice on April 15, 2005. This Department is in charge of the follow-up of issues related to Human Rights in general, the follow-up of the implementation of international conventions on Human Rights, information and sensitization of the staff of the Magistracy and Prisons Administration on the norms of protection of Human Rights. Worth noting is the fact that since 2005, the Penitentiary has been placed under the auspices of the Ministry of Justice. The creation of a Special Division in charge of the Police control should be equally highlighted.

Cameroon is a co-initiator of the Sub-regional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa, established in 2001, whose Headquarter is located in Yaoundé. Cameroon cooperates with the Centre for the promotion of Human Rights in the sub-region.

Since 2006, Cameroon has taken measures to fulfill its commitments in relation with the Human Rights Council.

1- Implementation of the 2006 Voluntary Pledge

In view of her election in the Human Rights Council in 2006, Cameroon fully committed herself to the respect of the obligations contained in Resolution A/Res/60/251 creating the Human Rights Council. In this regard Cameroon:

- Works for the effectiveness of the Civil and Political Rights, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as well as the Right to Development;

- Cooperates in this regard with Human Rights Regional Organizations, National Committee, Civil Society and Non Governmental Organizations;
- Works towards dialogue and cooperation in order to achieve the effectiveness and influence of Human Rights;
- Continues its efforts for the effectiveness of the integral compliance with Human Rights treaties and international agreements;
- Cooperates fully with Member States of the United Nations, Member States of the Human Rights Council with a view to participate in the effectiveness of the Human rights Council, guided by the principles of universality, impartiality and non selectivity;
- Works for the credibility of the Human Rights Council.

Thus, Cameroon has worked for:

a - The enforcement of the protection and promotion of:

- Civil and Political Rights: by the organization of democratic and transparent elections, the implementation of the decentralization, the arrest and judicial proceedings against Police staff guilty of Human Rights violations (disciplinary and legal sanctions have been taken against 47 Police staff since 2006), the entry in force of the new Criminal Prosecution Act in 2007 which contains measures more protective of Human Rights, more particularly the right to fair trial, the improvement of detention conditions and the organization of education campaigns on Human Rights whose main goals are to contribute to the acquisition by all Cameroonians of a genuine culture of law and Human Rights.

On the international scene, Cameroon signed in 2007 the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and in 2008 the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

At the national level, Cameroon has created an independent organ in charge of the organization and the control of elections (ONEL) in 2006, which has been replaced by ELECAM in 2009 for more efficiency. In December 2006, Cameroon adopted a Law organizing the Judiciary.

- Economic, Social and Cultural Rights including the Right to Development: The national economy straightening, resulted in the adoption of the budgetary measures to improve the public finance has lead to the amelioration of the living conditions of Cameroonians. Along the same lines, the Government has put emphasis on the social sectors such as education, health, youth employment, in view of the improvement of the quality of services in these fields.

The Cameroon Government, in order to face the unemployment and youth job insecurity initiated an ambitious program of recruitment in the Civil Service. Since the launching of this program, 18 800 primary school substitute teachers for the mainstream education en 2007 and 5 825 in 2008 have been inserted in the Cameroon Civil Service. Also, 1000 teachers have been recruited in the State Universities, 10 000 temporary staff have been inserted in the Civil Service, and 4500 young people have been admitted in the fields of Diplomacy, Health, Computing Statistic, Civil Engineering and Army.

In 2006, Cameroon passed two important pieces of legislation aimed at the improvement of good governance: Law No 2006/3 dated April 25, 2006 concerning the Declaration of assets of public officials and the Decree No 2006/88 dated March 11, 2006 creating the National Anti-corruption Committee.

b - Cameroon is committed to the promotion and the realization of the Right to Development, which, according to the Vienna Declaration, has the same value as the others rights.

c - Cameroon cooperates with the United Nations, the regional organizations and the Civil Society for the promotion of Human Rights: in 2006, Cameroon submitted her national Report to the Committee of the Rights of Child and in 2008 finalized and submitted her reports to the others Human Rights committees. In January 2009 the Cameroon report to the CEDAW were considered. Following the Letter No G/SO 214 (53-21) dated September 4, 2007 of the Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council Mr. Manfred NOWACK, which contained many observations and recommendations, the

Government gave clarifications on the implementation of the Convention against Torture. An invitation was addressed to Mr. Ambeyi LIGABO, Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to freedom of opinion and expression in May 2008, and to Amnesty International. Cameroon has made efforts to follow up the communications, questionnaires and urgent appeals received from the different Special Procedures.

d - In the process of the elaboration of its reports, the Government works closely with the Civil Society and maintains with them a constant link for the promotion and the protection of Human Rights when it comes to the rights of certain groups.

e - Cameroon contributed to the work of the Human Rights Council in order for this organ to efficiently carry out its mission. In this regard Cameroon attended all the regular and special sessions of the Human Rights Council. Cameroon has been one of the four members of the Troïka. Cameroon has been submitted to the Universal Periodical Review of February, 05, 2009.

2 – Cameroon's New Commitments

During its second mandate at the Human Rights Council, Cameroon is committed to continue the promotion and the protection of the Human Rights. The main goals are:

a - Be a part to all International Instruments of the Human Rights conventions and agreements to which she is not yet a participant and in particular:

- Adhere to the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of Child, concerning respectively involvement of children in arm conflict and the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography adopted in May 25, 2000;
- Adhere to the Convention on the Protection of Rights of all Migrant Workers and the Members of their Families;
- Ratify and implement the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in the Education.

b - Promote the Rights of women by:

- The reinforcement of the programs for the improvement of the status of women;
- The adoption of the legislation against the female genital mutilations and the development of awareness against this practice;
- The consideration of the observations of CEDAW for the effectiveness of the rights of women;
- The follow up of actions engaged against all forms of discrimination against women.

c - Engage in the strengthening of the protection of the Rights of children by:

- The consideration of the rights of children in the programs aimed to the improvement of the living conditions of the populations;
- The implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of Children concerning the homeless children;
- The Prevention of the trafficking of children as well as child labor and the amelioration of the measures of protection of the victims of such practices;
- Amelioration of the treatment of minors under detention.

d - Reinforce the ongoing efforts in the areas of prison administration by:

- Assuring the compliance of detention conditions with international standards;
- Facilitating the access to detention facilities to national and international humanitarian organizations;
- Accelerating the reform of the prison system, including the building of new prisons;

- Reinforcing the independence of the Judiciary;
- Respecting the rights of detainees.

e - Guarantee the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights within the limits of the available resources, in particular:

- The Right to Health: reinforce the programs of the fight against VIH/AIDS and the system of health in general;
- The Rights to Education: Cameroon will continue its efforts in order to improve the quality of education, guarantee free public education in Primary Schools and improve the implementation of the World Program and the Plan of Action for the Human Rights Education;
- The Fight against corruption and ameliorate the Governance.

f - Continue its actions in favor of the respect of Civil and Political Rights in particular the freedom of press, transparent elections by allocating necessary resources for ELECAM, the national organ for the elections control to carry out its mission.

g - Strengthen measures to guarantee and protect minorities, persons with disabilities and others vulnerable sectors of the population.

h - Reinforce Cameroon's action in favor of peace, the preservation of ecosystems at the sub regional level, increase her participation in Peace Keeping Operations on one hand, and on the other hand, ameliorate her implication in the sub regional structures for the protection of environment and the promotion of sustainable development (Central Africa Commission on Forest, Commission on the Lake Chad Basin etc…).

i - Work with the National Committee for Human Rights and Freedoms and the Civil Society for the improvement of the general situation of Human Rights in Cameroon and the popularization of a culture of human Rights.

j - Reinforce Cameroon's cooperation with the Treaties Body and the Special Procedures and continue to work with the Member States for the credibility of the Human Rights Council.